



# Child Welfare Services (CWS) Redesign

AN OVERVIEW  
September 2003

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# The Case for Change

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- 650,000 reported cases of child abuse/neglect each year
- 700,000 children in contact with CWS annually
- 91,000 children in foster care
- 35% of foster children experience 3 or more placements
- Substance abuse factors into 80% of child maltreatment cases
- 7% of state's children are African-American but 30% of children in CWS

## California's Challenge

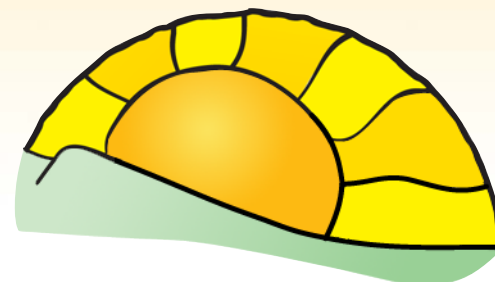
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- California has
  - ◆ 13% of nation's child population
  - ◆ 20% of nation's foster care population
- No fundamental change in CWS system for 20 years
- Despite 32% funding increase for CWS, social worker caseloads too high to do the job

## Responding to the Challenge

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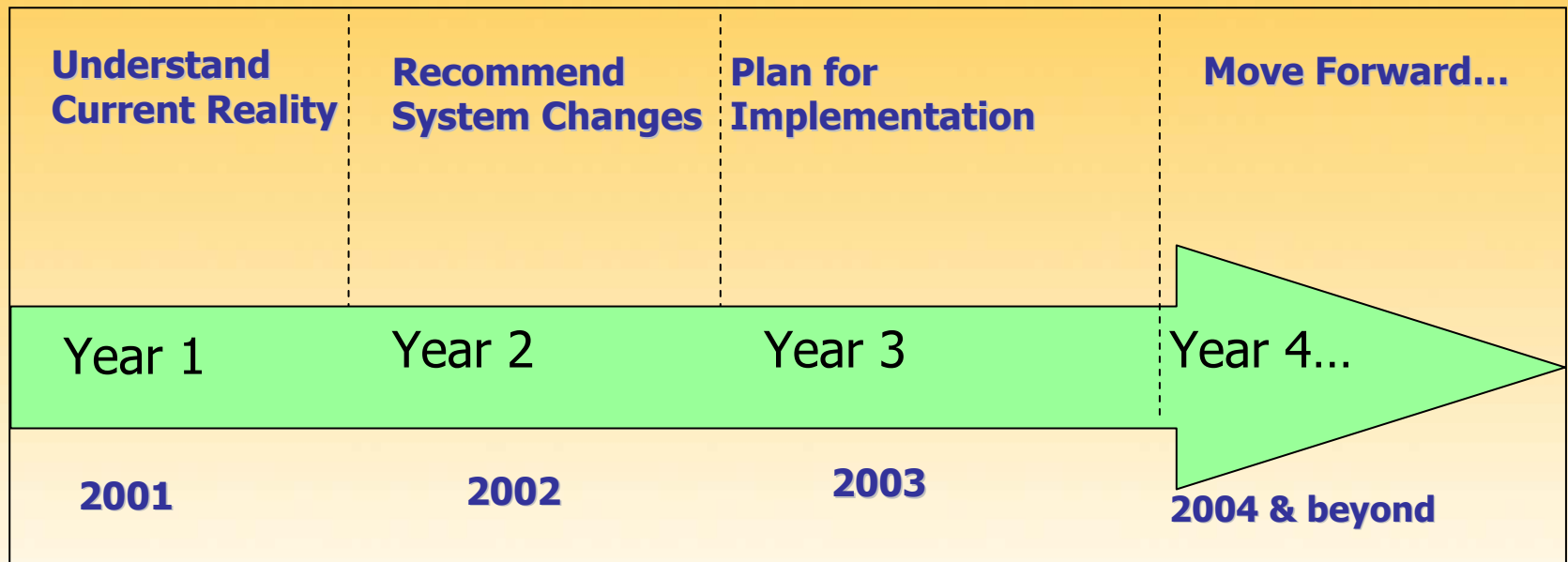
- CWS Stakeholders Group initiated by Governor Davis in July 2000
- Authorized by Legislature
- Charged with examining current CWS system and making recommendations for improvements



# The new vision for CWS

**A vision of every child living in a  
safe, stable, permanent home,  
nurtured by healthy families and  
strong communities**

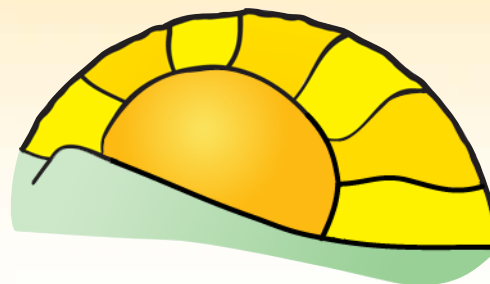
# The Redesign Process



# Goals of CWS Redesign

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- Improved outcomes for children and families
  - ✓ Safety
  - ✓ Permanency
  - ✓ Child well-being
  - ✓ Family well-being



## Long-term strategic plan

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- Comprehensive
- Multi-year
- Integrated set of
  - ✓ Policy shifts
  - ✓ Practice improvements
  - ✓ Alignment of partners, systems and communities
  - ✓ New accountability structures



# CWS Landscape

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- Stakeholders Group/CWS Redesign: 2000-2003
- California Child Welfare Outcomes and Accountability Act (AB636, C-CFSR): 2001
- Federal Performance Improvement Plan (PIP): 2003



# CWS Redesign

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- Strategic plan (5-10 years)
- Provides conceptual framework, strategies and actions
- Describes practice implications and resources needed to support counties
- Bold and fundamental change!

# Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)—————

- Short-term tactical actions
- Federally driven process for all 50 states
- Creates annual Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)
- Identifies key activities to attain the outcomes of the CFSR using strategies of the Redesign



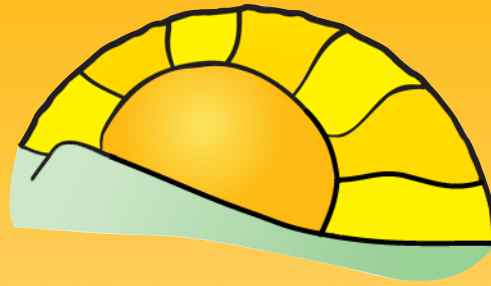
# California Child Welfare Outcomes and Accountability System (AB636)

- A new outcomes-based review system – California Children and Family Services Review (C-CFSR)
- State develops county-based performance targets based on set of indicators
- Quarterly reports – continuous measurement and feedback
- Parallels federal CFSR outcomes, but expands on indicators
- Measures progress and impact of Redesign

# Key Outcome Indicators

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- Fewer children are abused/neglected
- Fewer children in foster care
- Fewer children re-enter foster care
- Fewer multiple placements for children in foster care
- Reduced length of time to reunify children with parents or caretakers
- Reduced length of time to achieve adoption (less than 24 months)
- Increased levels of health/education support for children in foster care



# CWS Redesign Objectives

**“Build Upon the Best – Reinvent the Rest”**

**9 Objectives**

# Objective #1: Partner to prevent child abuse and neglect

- Establishes partnerships:
  - ◆ State, county and community levels
- Develops local networks of resources and opportunities
- Uses flexible funding strategies



## Objective #2: Act early to preserve and strengthen families

- New intake structure
- Contracts with public and private agencies to share responsibility
- Uses standardized approach for safety assessment
- Promotes more contact with families
- Comprehensive assessment
- Team decision-making; engages families
- Provides continuum of services

## Current Intake Structure

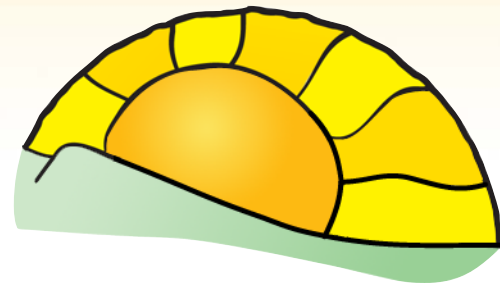
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- Each year:
  - ◆ 650,000 hotline calls
  - ◆ 92% of calls receive no services
  - ◆ 1/3 of calls are repeat referrals
- CWS funding and policies: can only intervene in most serious cases
- Need: early intervention/individualized response

# New Intake Structure

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- Fundamental change – at heart of Redesign
- Changes from “one size fits all” model of the past
- Customizes services/support for at-risk families
- Uses community-based, multidisciplinary teams
- Sets up 3 pathways for response



# Pathways for Response

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At intake (enhanced hotline):



1. Community response and follow-up (cases diverted from traditional CWS response)
2. CWS response (low to moderate level of risk)
3. CWS high-risk response (child is removed from home)

## Objective #3: Broaden efforts to restore family capacity

- Inclusive, comprehensive case planning
- Early, safe restoration of families
- Sufficient legal advocacy
- Uses less adversarial approaches
- Engages extended families as partners
- Extends deadline for case plans from 30 to 60 days



## Objective #4: Strengthen alternatives to rebuild permanent families for children

- Inclusive, flexible and comprehensive case planning
- Emphasizes birth family connections
- “Forever Families” for every child



## Objective #5: Systematically prepare youth for success in adulthood

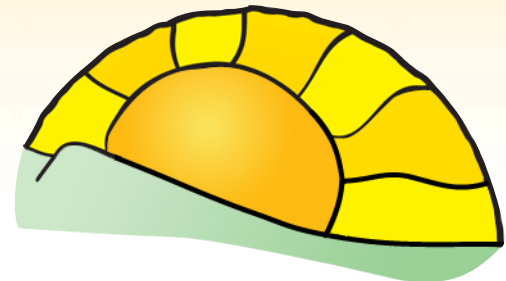
- Inclusive, flexible and comprehensive case planning
- Strong and enduring ties for every youth
- Community network of services and supports
- “Guaranteed preparation package” for every youth at age 18

## Objective #6: Affect change through excellence in workforce

- Shift the organizational culture
- Expand workforce capacity
- Partner with Resource Foster Families
- Build skills and competencies of workforce
- Integrated learning systems
- Measure results of workforce development
- Support manageable caseloads

## Objective #7: Strengthen interagency partnerships at the state and local levels

- Cross-train interagency workforce members
- Enhance service integration and coordination
- Blend multiple funding streams
- Encourage leadership of the court
- Establish less adversarial court environment



# Redesign Systems Change

Bringing People Together to make change happen

- CWS & Cal-WORKS (the link between poverty and child abuse)
- CWS & Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD)
- CWS & Mental Health Services
- CWS & Domestic Violence
- CWS & the Courts



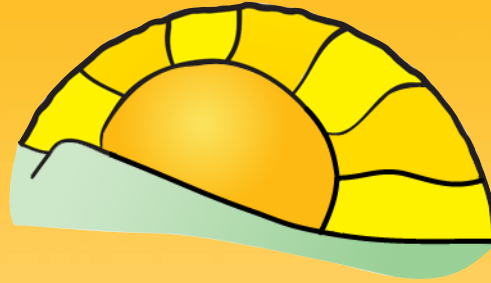
## Objective #8: Expand and restructure child welfare financing

- Seek approval for more flexible use of federal and state funds
- Restructure and realign state support with 10 county fiscal strategies
- Develop strategic partnerships with philanthropy and First 5 Commissions
- Establish a Fiscal Training Academy
- Advocate for federal child welfare fiscal reform

## Objective #9: Achieve better outcomes through accountability

- Achieve goals outlined in PIP
- Track performance via Outcomes and Accountability measures (C-CFSR)
- Establish a Redesign Practice Framework
- Establish centralized Evidence-Based Practice Clearinghouse
- Ensure fair and equitable outcomes/address disproportionality





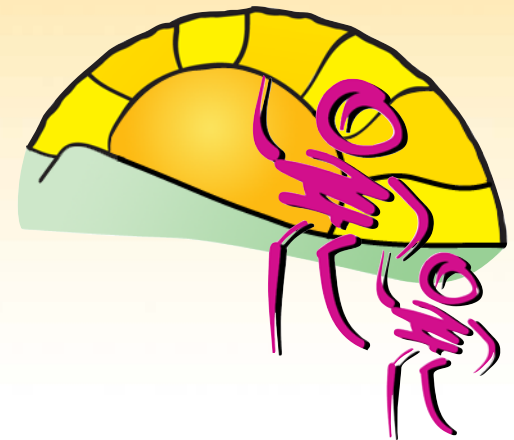
# **Redesign Implementation Plan**

**Moving Forward!**

# Implementation

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- County Incorporation of Redesign
- Partners and Systems
- Fiscal Strategies
- Legislative Strategies
- Technology
- Outcomes and Accountability



## County Incorporation of Redesign

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- Translates Redesign into 8 implementation components
- Self-assessment via Readiness Matrix
- Community planning/grant activity
- Four Implementation Cohorts
- Training and technical assistance
  - ◆ Breakthrough Series Collaborative
  - ◆ Integrated CWS Learning Systems
  - ◆ Redesign Implementation Guide

# Partners and Systems

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- State interagency child welfare team
- Public-private partnership: CDSS and Foundation Consortium for California's Children & Youth
- Foster youth & former foster youth
- Counties and local communities
- Champions for Children



# Fiscal Strategies

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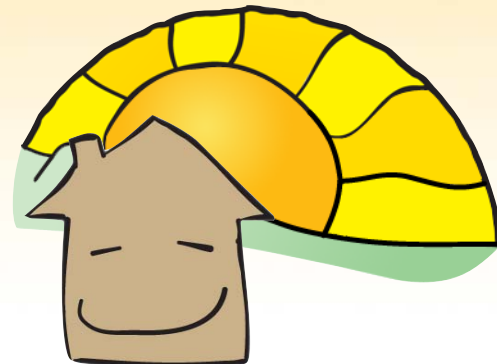
- Acquisition of Additional Resources
  - ◆ County and community investment
  - ◆ Foundation investment (\$10 million)
- Fiscal reforms
  - ◆ Federal advocacy
  - ◆ County allocation flexibility
  - ◆ State reinvestment of foster care savings



# Legislative Strategies

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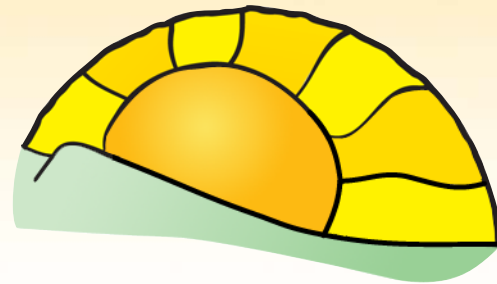
- Legislative and regulatory changes
  - ◆ In areas of prevention, permanency and youth transitions
- Partnering with legislative leaders
  - ◆ Interim hearings
  - ◆ Development and introduction of legislation



# Technology

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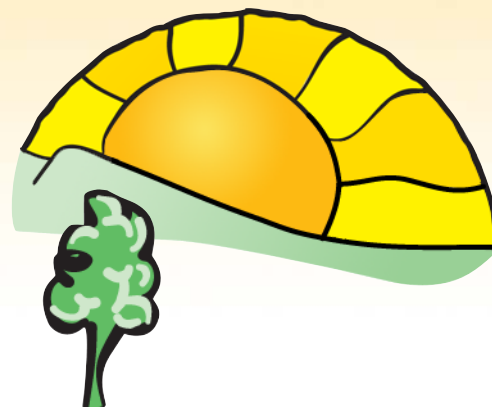
- Child Welfare Service/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) improvements
- Goal: Align CWS/CMS with Redesign
- Request federal approval for changes



# Outcomes and Accountability

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- Federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) & Program Improvement Plan (PIP)
- California Child Welfare Outcomes & Accountability System (AB636)



## What will Success look like? \_\_\_\_\_

- Children are safer
- Families are stronger
- Youth are supported
- Services are more responsive
- Results are more fair and equitable
- Children experience greater stability
- Communities share responsibility for child welfare
- Families realize their potential



For more information .....

# California Department of Social Services

[www.dss.cahwnet.gov](http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov)

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# Child Welfare Services (CWS) Redesign



**State of California**  
**Gray Davis, Governor**

**Health and Human Service Agency**  
**Grantland Johnson, Secretary**

**Department of Social Services**  
**Rita Saenz, Director**